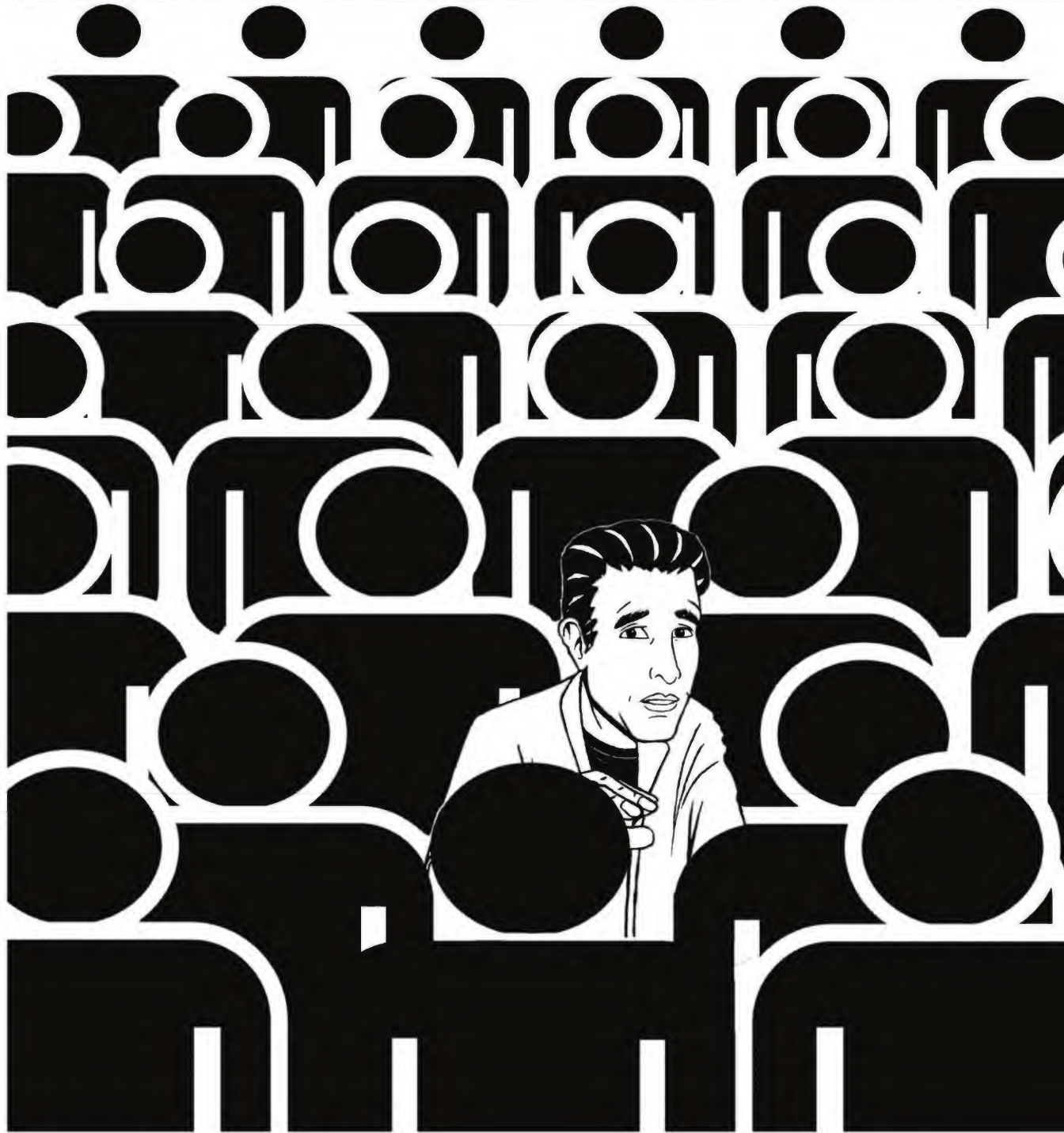


BY CEZAR MARCILIO

# HAVEN'T WE MET BEFORE?



**WHEN EVERYBODY ACTS THE SAME WAY YOU  
CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE.**



## PROLOGUE

"Haven't we met before" is a story about hope and how people approach and distance themselves from each other through their decisions and attitudes.

In the future, corporations and politicians put inside of citizens' minds the idea that better days are coming; while they believe this, they don't have another alternative except to wait, wait and wait a little more for illusory opportunities in endless lines. They have become used to an apathetic life while rich men become richer with their works and their waiting.

In this depressive society some characters show their feelings about the strangeness world around them. Jeff is an excitable guy, full of energy, hope and ideas to improve his life. Together with his friends Brian and Thompson, he has tried many ways to leave Hope city. Daisy is a depressed and troubled prostitute, with many secrets and much anguish locked within. She lives her days without knowing what to do to alleviate her pain.

Each decision these people make affect each of the others, showing us how strangers' acts can directly affect our lives. Pain, lies and deaths are parts of this story about the quest for hope.

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I'M HERE TO TALK ABOUT A CITY. A CITY I'VE BEEN WATCHING... TRYING TO UNDERSTAND. AT FIRST GLANCE, IT MAY LOOK LIKE ANY OTHER CITY, BUT IF WE LOOK CLOSER, IT'S AN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT WORLD...A WORLD ORGANIZED BY LINES. IN THIS NOT TOO DISTANT FUTURE, CIVIL WARS, UNEMPLOYMENT AND A GROWING POPULATION HAVE FORCED CITY LEADERS TO ADOPT A SYSTEM IN ORDER TO ORGANIZE THEIR POPULATION. THESE CITIES ARE KNOWN CALLED... "HOPE CITIES".



AFTER GRADUATING FROM HIGH SCHOOL, THOSE WHO DO NOT MEET EXPECTATIONS TO EARN BETTER JOBS, HAVE PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS OR MAKE ENOUGH MONEY TO GO TO A UNIVERSITY WITHIN ONE YEAR ARE KEPT IN THESE CITIES. IN ORDER TO LEAVE, THEY MUST STAY HERE UNTIL THEY AFFORD ENOUGH CREDITS. ONCE THIS IS OBTAINED THEY MAY TRAVEL BACK TO THEIR ORIGINAL CITIES WHERE THE LINE SYSTEM DOES NOT EXIST. LET ME TRY TO CLARIFY THIS FURTHER.







IMAGINE LIVING HERE. THE GOVERNMENT ROUTES YOU TO THIS CITY AND THERE YOU RECEIVE A HOPE CARD. EVERYTHING YOU CONSUME, EARN AND SPEND IS THROUGH THIS CARD. YOU CANNOT LOSE IT. HERE, THERE IS **NO MONEY** - ONLY YOUR HOPE CARD.



EVERY DAY YOU MUST TAKE ON A DIFFERENT FORM OF EMPLOYMENT AND WAIT IN THE EMPLOYMENT LINES. THERE ARE LINES TO ALMOST EVERY TEDIOUS JOB IMAGINABLE: "SCREW TIGHTENER," DRESSMAKER, TYPIST, MECHANIC...



... SUGAR PACKERS AND KNIFE SHARPENERS. THERE ARE LINES FOR BAKING, GLUING SHOE SOLES, FIXING PIECES OF APPARATUS TOGETHER...



MOST JOBS DO NOT REQUIRE EXPERIENCE OR PRIOR KNOWLEDGE. HOWEVER, THE JOBS TEND TO BE REPETITIVE. ALL SERVICES THAT THE ORDINARY CITIES DO NOT WANT ARE DEPLOYED TO THE HOPE CITIES.



THE LINES ARE ABOUT AN HOUR AND A HALF WAIT BEFORE YOU CAN ACTUALLY START WORKING. YOU MUST WORK AT LEAST THREE HOURS DURING YOUR SHIFT IN ORDER TO ACCUMULATE CREDITS FOR YOUR HOPE CARD.



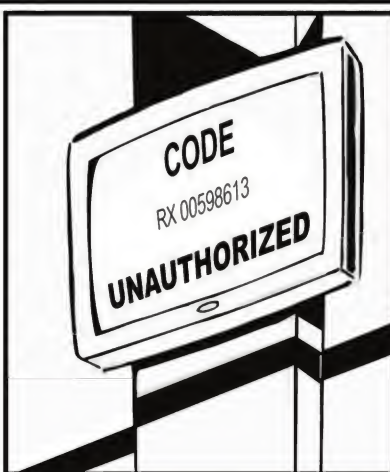
AFTER YOU LEAVE THE WORKPLACE, YOU'LL TYPICALLY DEVELOP AN APPETITE. THERE ARE LINES SET UP IN MULTIPLE PLACES TO RECEIVE A MEAL. LINES FOR COFFEE, SANDWICHES, ICE CREAM, AND EVEN BEER.





OF COURSE, ALL OF THE CITIZENS PAY WITH THEIR HOPE CARD. ONCE MORE, YOU NEED TO WAIT TO EAT. FROM HERE, YOU'VE SPENT SIX HOURS OF YOUR DAY. BUT IT DOESN'T END THERE. AFTER YOUR MEAL, YOU NEED TO SEEK ANOTHER LINE FOR ANOTHER JOB.

THE CITIZENS CAN'T WORK IN ANY GIVEN AREA MORE THAN TWICE A DAY, BUT THEY CAN WORK THE SAME JOB IN ANOTHER PLACE. SO, MY FRIEND, IT LOOKS LIKE YOU NEED TO SPEND ABOUT TWO MORE HOURS IN ANOTHER LINE AND THREE MORE HOURS WORKING ANOTHER JOB.



WHEN YOU ACCUMULATE THOUSANDS OF CREDITS ON YOUR HOPE CARD, YOU CAN APPLY FOR AUTHORIZATION TO LEAVE THE HOPE CITY AND GO TO A NORMAL CITY.

YOU MUST WORK A LOT TO SAVE UP ENOUGH CREDITS AND YOU HAVE TO SPEND AS LITTLE AS YOU CAN. SINCE IT'S VERY DIFFICULT TO DO THAT, MANY PEOPLE HAVE GOTTEN USED TO A LIFESTYLE INDUCED BY THE GOVERNMENT AND LARGE CORPORATIONS.



THEY LIVE REPEATING THEIR LIVES, ONLY WAITING FOR BETTER DAYS, AS IF IT WAS A FARAWAY DREAM. A DREAM AMIDST A SEA OF HOPE...NAY, A SEA OF LINES.

IF YOU WERE TO ASK IF THERE WERE ANYTHING FUN TO DO HERE. YOU'D BE SURPRISED TO FIND THAT THERE ACTUALLY IS. THERE ARE LINES TO PARTIES, TO MOVIE THEATRES, MALLS, AND, OF COURSE...





DEPRESSION, DISCOURAGEMENT, REPETITIVE WORK AND WAITING. THIS IS LIFE IN THE HOPE CITIES, BUT THERE ARE STILL DIFFERENT KINDS OF PEOPLE. PEOPLE WHO ARE ALWAYS LOOKING FOR SOMETHING MEANINGFUL IN THEIR LIVES. PEOPLE WHO HAVEN'T LOST HOPE, DESPITE LIVING IN THIS TASTELESS WORLD.







THIS IS JEFF, ONE MORE NUMBER IN THE MIDDLE OF THE INFINITE LINES OF HOPE CITY NUMBER 13. HE'S A GUY WHO NEVER LOST HIS HOPE. AT LEAST WHEN IT RELATES TO WOMEN.





THE TALLEST GUY IS **BRIAN**, A REALLY NICE GUY. HE SUPPORTS JEFF IN ALL HIS PLANS. THE GUY IN THE MIDDLE IS **THOMPSON**. NOBODY UNDERSTANDS HIM. HIS FATHER IS A RICH MAN WHO COULD EASILY GET HIM OUT OF HOPE CITY BUT DOESN'T. THOMPSON'S FATHER, **HARRY THOMPSON**, IS AN OWNER OF A FACTORY THAT MANUFACTURES AND DESIGNS GUN PARTS.



HE IS ONE OF THE BOSSES OF THE GUN MANUFACTURING COMPANY LOCATED WITHIN THE HOPE CITIES. HE LIVES HERE, BUT HE DOESN'T NEED TO FACE LINES. THE BOSS CAN LEAVE THE HOPE CITY ANYTIME HE WANTS. HE USUALLY VISITS OR LIVES IN HOPE CITY JUST FOR BUSINESS. HIS BUSINESSES, HOWEVER, AREN'T VERY ETHICAL.

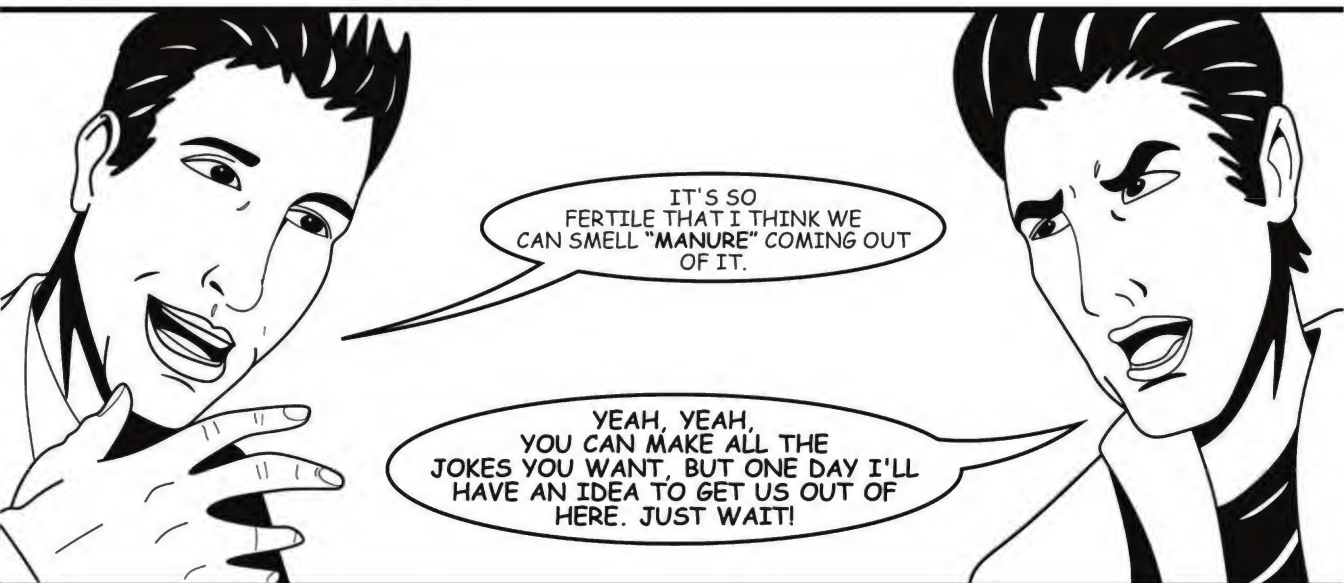
**BRIAN'S FATHER, MR. HANK**, RUNS HIS OWN COMPANY TOO, MANUFACTURING WINDOWS. IT'S A LITTLE COMPANY WITH MANY BILLS AND TAXES TO PAY. IF HE WERE TO LOSE ANY OF HIS PROFIT, HE WOULD LOSE HIS POSITION AS A BOSS, AND THE GOVERNMENT WOULD ROUTE HIM TO THE LINES.



HIS SALARY IS ENOUGH JUST TO KEEP HIS POSITION AND HIS COMPANY. BECAUSE OF THAT, HE CAN'T HELP HIS SON. HE'S A SOLITARY WIDOWER, WHO OFTEN WORRIES ABOUT HIS ONLY SON.















THIS IS DAISY, BUT SOME CALL HER NAMES LIKE HOOKER, BITCH, EASY, OR "PRINCESS OF PLEASURE."



HEY, DAISY. HAVEN'T SEEN YOU WORKING MUCH LATELY. IF YOU KEEP THIS UP, YOU'LL NEVER LEAVE THIS DAMN CITY.

ACCORDING TO WHAT CUSTOMERS HAVE SAID, HER BODY HAS CAUSED EVERY MAN TO RAISE HIS HANDS TO THE SKY AND THANK GOD FOR THEIR BALLS. SHE IS A VERY SEXY WOMAN. HOWEVER, IN THE LAST FEW DAYS, SHE HAS BEEN UPSET, WHICH IS COMMON HERE IN HOPE CITY. SHE IS ALWAYS WEARING HEAVY CLOTHING AND A BANDANA TO LOOK LESS BEAUTIFUL.



SORRY PHOEBE.

WHEN DEPRESSION KNOCKS ON YOUR DOOR, IT'S IMPOSSIBLE NOT TO LET HIM IN. I HATE THIS CITY...



THE PROBLEM IS THAT YOU LET THE DEPRESSION KNOCK ON YOUR DOOR, COME IN YOUR HOUSE, PLACE HIS HAND ON YOUR ASS AND SHIT IN YOUR BATHROOM WITH THE DOOR OPEN.

FUCK, DAISY! EVERYONE HATES THIS CITY...

THE PROSTITUTES CAN WORK THE SAME JOB EVERY DAY AT THE SAME PLACE. BEYOND THIS IS A LEGALIZED SERVICE. IT REQUIRES A LOT OF PHYSICAL ATTRIBUTES.



I KNOW.

...BUT BEING DEPRESSED DOESN'T IMPROVE YOUR SITUATION.



AND LOOK AT US. WE'RE HOT!

IF WE DO OUR WORK WELL AND GET SOME GOOD TIPS, WE CAN LEAVE THIS SHITTY PLACE.





I WISH I  
HAD THIS RESERVOIR  
OF RANDINESS YOU  
HAVE.



HAHAHA...

I JUST  
REMEMBERED SOMETHING

SO,  
DAISY. EVERY  
THURSDAY AT BUILDING  
358 AROUND 1 A.M. I HAVE A  
CUSTOMER WHO PAYS  
VERY WELL.

HE  
ASKED ME ONCE  
IF I HAD A FRIEND I  
COULD BRING...



...YOU  
KNOW, A "LITTLE  
THREE WAY"  
ACTION.

WOULD  
YOU BE  
INTERESTED?







DEPRESSING, DISPIRITED, TEDIOUS. THESE ALL DESCRIBE THE FEELINGS FOUND WITHIN HOPE CITY.

IF THERE WAS A LINE FOR OBTAINING HAPPINESS, CERTAINLY IT WOULD BE THE LONGEST.



AFTER EVERY WEEK PASSES, THE CITIZENS MUST CHANGE THEIR ACCOMMODATIONS. IT'S ONE MORE WAY FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO KEEP THE PEOPLE IN LINE AND THE ECONOMY IN MOTION. OF COURSE, YOU ARE ALLOWED TO CHOOSE THE KIND OF ACCOMMODATION.



IF YOU WANT TO SAVE CREDITS, THERE ARE CHEAP ACCOMMODATIONS AVAILABLE, AS LONG AS YOU'RE NOT WORRIED ABOUT SLEEPING WITH SEVERAL PEOPLE IN THE SAME BEDROOM.



MORE PEOPLE ARE WORKING, MORE PEOPLE ARE SPENDING CREDITS, MORE CONFORMED PEOPLE. ALL THE CREDITS FROM HOPE CITIES BECOME MONEY OUTSIDE, IN THE NORMAL CITIES. IN OTHER WORDS, THE HOPE CITY'S ECONOMY MAKES HUGE MONEY TO BUSINESSES OUT THERE, BUSINESSES OF PEOPLE WHO DON'T CARE ABOUT THE PEOPLE IN HOPE CITY.





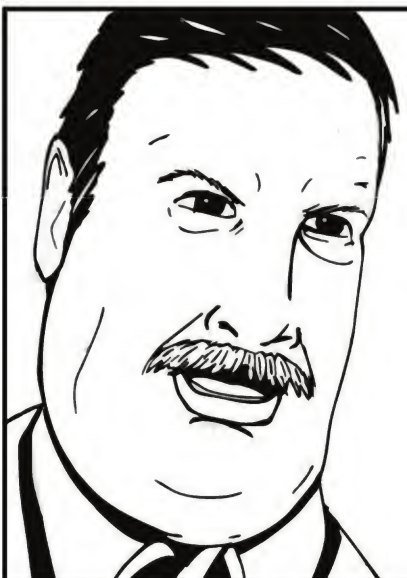


ANOTHER PROFESSION THAT DOESN'T NEED TO FACE LINES ARE THE **LAWMAKERS**. IT'S NOT COMMON FOR CRIME TO OCCUR IN THIS CITY. BUT WHEN IT HAPPENS, THEY'RE USUALLY HARD TO INVESTIGATE.

DETECTIVE MILLER AND HIS **SIDEKICK CANDY** ARE TWO "CORRUPTION PROOF" LAWMAKERS.



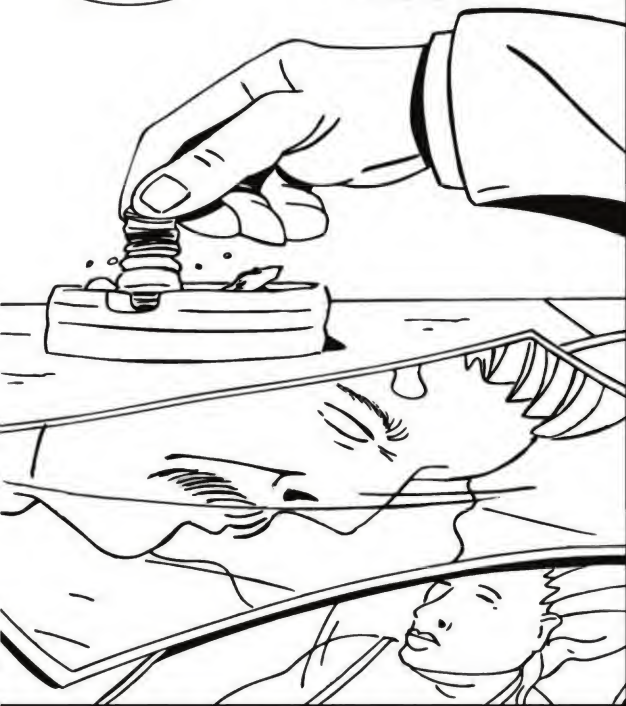
THEY TREAT ALL INVESTIGATIONS WITH **ZERO TOLERANCE**, ESPECIALLY THE INVESTIGATIONS ABOUT MR. THOMPSON'S BUSINESS.





IF IT WERE MY FAULT, I WOULDN'T STAY IN THIS BUSINESS.

AND LOOK, GUNS DON'T KILL PEOPLE, PEOPLE KILLS PEOPLE. THE GUNS ONLY FACILITATE IT.



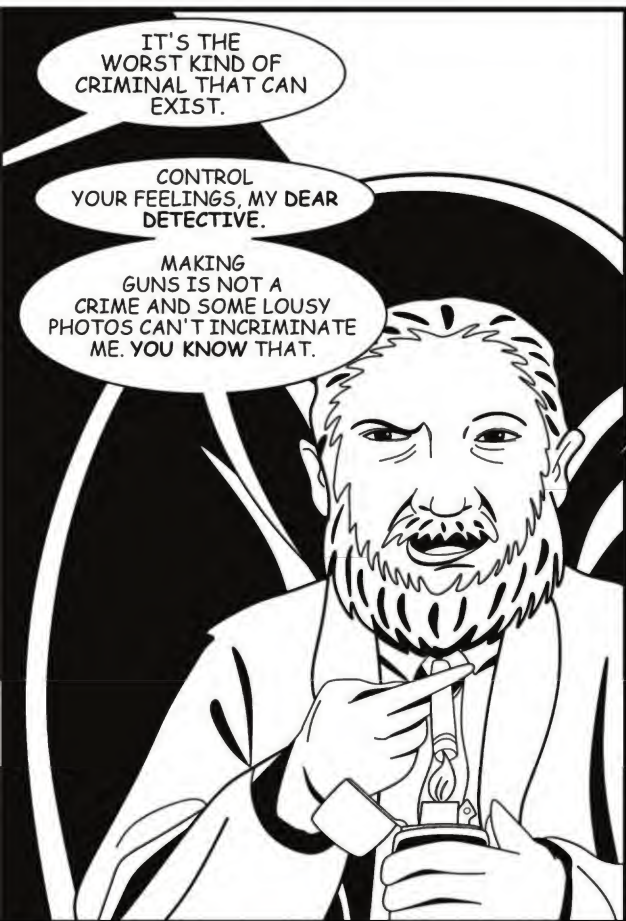
BUT YOU KNOW YOUR DAMN BUSINESS INDIRECTLY KILLS INNOCENTS AND YOU DON'T FUCKING CARE ABOUT THAT AS LONG AS YOU'RE MAKING CREDITS AND MONEY.



IT'S THE WORST KIND OF CRIMINAL THAT CAN EXIST.

CONTROL YOUR FEELINGS, MY DEAR DETECTIVE.

MAKING GUNS IS NOT A CRIME AND SOME LOUSY PHOTOS CAN'T INCRIMINATE ME. YOU KNOW THAT.



IT'S NOT ABOUT GUNS, THE REAL PROBLEM IS PEOPLE'S MINDS.



I MIGHT KNOW HOW TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THEIR IGNORANCE.







WE KNOW  
WE CAN'T ACCUSE YOU  
OF SOME PHOTOS, BUT WE'RE  
NOT GIVING UP.

AND  
WE'LL KEEP  
TAILING, TAILING  
INCREASINGLY UNTIL  
YOU SLIP UP.



KEEP THESE  
PHOTOS WITH YOU AS A  
REMINDER OF HOW YOUR BUSINESS  
AFFECTS OTHERS.



THANKS  
FOR THE GIFT. I'LL  
TAKE GREAT CARE OF  
THEM.

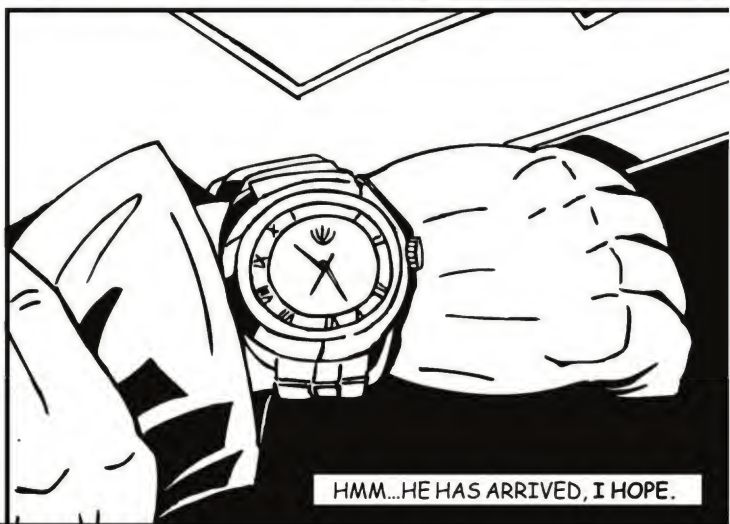


I  
HOPE  
SO.

NEXT  
WEEK WE'LL BE  
BACK FOR ONE MORE  
VISIT.

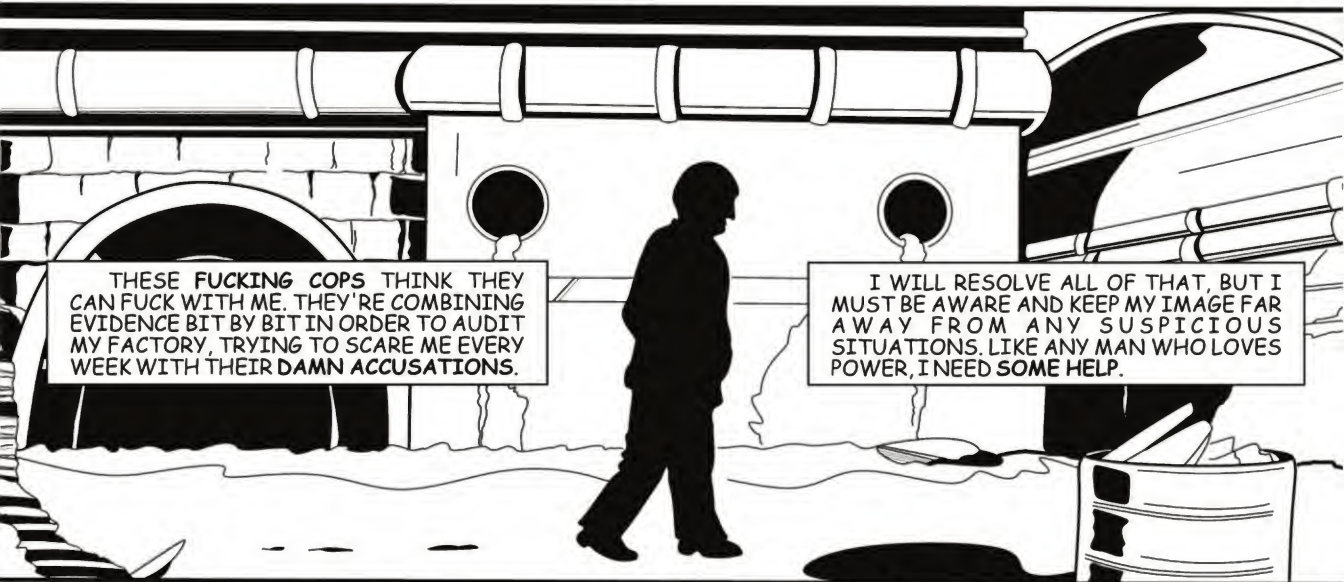


I'M  
LOOKING  
FORWARD TO  
IT.



HMM...HE HAS ARRIVED, I HOPE.





THESE FUCKING COPS THINK THEY CAN FUCK WITH ME. THEY'RE COMBINING EVIDENCE BIT BY BIT IN ORDER TO AUDIT MY FACTORY, TRYING TO SCARE ME EVERY WEEK WITH THEIR DAMN ACCUSATIONS.

I WILL RESOLVE ALL OF THAT, BUT I MUST BE AWARE AND KEEP MY IMAGE FAR AWAY FROM ANY SUSPICIOUS SITUATIONS. LIKE ANY MAN WHO LOVES POWER, I NEED SOME HELP.



YOU'RE A PUNCTUAL MAN. LOOKS LIKE I ASKED FOR HELP FROM THE RIGHT PERSON.



I DIDN'T COME HERE TO HELP YOU...



I CAME  
HERE BECAUSE YOU  
PROMISED ME A SUCCESSFUL  
BUSINESS.

YOU'RE  
BLUNT. I LIKE  
THAT. BUT I'M NOT  
ASKING FOR YOUR HELP. I  
WANT TO HIRE YOU FOR  
YOUR SERVICES,  
BRIAN.

YOUR SON  
IS A FRIEND WHO I  
APPRECIATE, I'M NOT SURE I CAN  
SAY THE SAME ABOUT YOU.

WE CAN  
TALK WHILE WE WALK  
THROUGH THE SEWERS HERE.  
COME ON.

IT'S  
BEEN A LONG  
TIME SINCE I'VE  
WALKED WITHOUT A  
MILLION PEOPLE IN  
FRONT OF ME.

THERE  
ARE A LOT OF  
GALLERIES AND CORRIDORS  
HIDDEN UNDER THIS  
FACTORY.

A COUPLE  
OF MINUTES AGO  
SOME DETECTIVES WERE IN  
MY OFFICE, **BLAMING** ME FOR  
GUN TRAFFICKING AND  
MURDERS OUTSIDE OF  
THIS CITY.

HUMANKIND  
IS FUNNY. THEY HAVE  
ONLY TWO PATHS TO FOLLOW IN  
LIFE. A GOOD ONE AND A BAD ONE.  
WHEN THEY CHOOSE THE BAD ONE,  
BAD THINGS START TO  
HAPPEN.

THEY  
BLAME DRUGS,  
MONEY, GUNS, GOD, BUT  
NEVER THEMSELVES. IT'S SO  
DAMN SELFISH, IN MY  
OPINION.

WHAT'RE  
YOU GETTING AT?

I  
WANT  
YOU TO  
KILL  
SOMEONE  
FOR ME.

ARE YOU  
CRAZY, MAN?

WHAT  
MAKES YOU  
THINK I WOULD  
DO THAT? I  
WOULD  
NEVER...

FOR A  
MAN WHO  
USED TO DO PETTY  
**CRIMES**, YOU LOOK  
PRETTY SCARED NOW.  
YOU DON'T KNOW HOW  
HARD IT IS TO TRUST  
SOMEONE TO DO  
JOBS LIKE THIS.



THAT WAS WHEN I NEEDED TO HELP MY FATHER, BUT NOW I PREFER...

YOU PREFER NOTHING, MY FRIEND. YOU'RE ONE MORE POOR GUY WALKING IN A LINE, BEGGING FOR CREDITS IN EACH FUCKING JOB.

YOUR FATHER IS A WIDOWER AND AN ALMOST BANKRUPT MAN. DON'T LIE TO YOURSELF. HE STILL NEEDS YOUR HELP. LET ME EXPLAIN MY SITUATION AND THE PROPOSAL.

HIDDEN IN THESE GALLERIES, SOME OF MY DAMN EMPLOYEES ARE DEALING GUN PARTS, UNDER MY NOSE. I WOULD LIKE TO DEAL ENTIRE GUNS, NOT JUST PARTS OF THEM. BUT SELLING PARTS IS THE ONLY WAY TO MAKE CREDITS AND MONEY OUTSIDE OF HERE.

THE GUNMAKING BUSINESS WAS BANNED A LONG TIME AGO.

MY CUSTOMERS ARE FAR AWAY FROM HERE, FAR AWAY FROM THE COPS EVEN. THE PROBLEM IS THESE MEN ARE DEALING GUNS TO THE NEIGHBORING TOWNS. THAT'S A BIG MISTAKE.

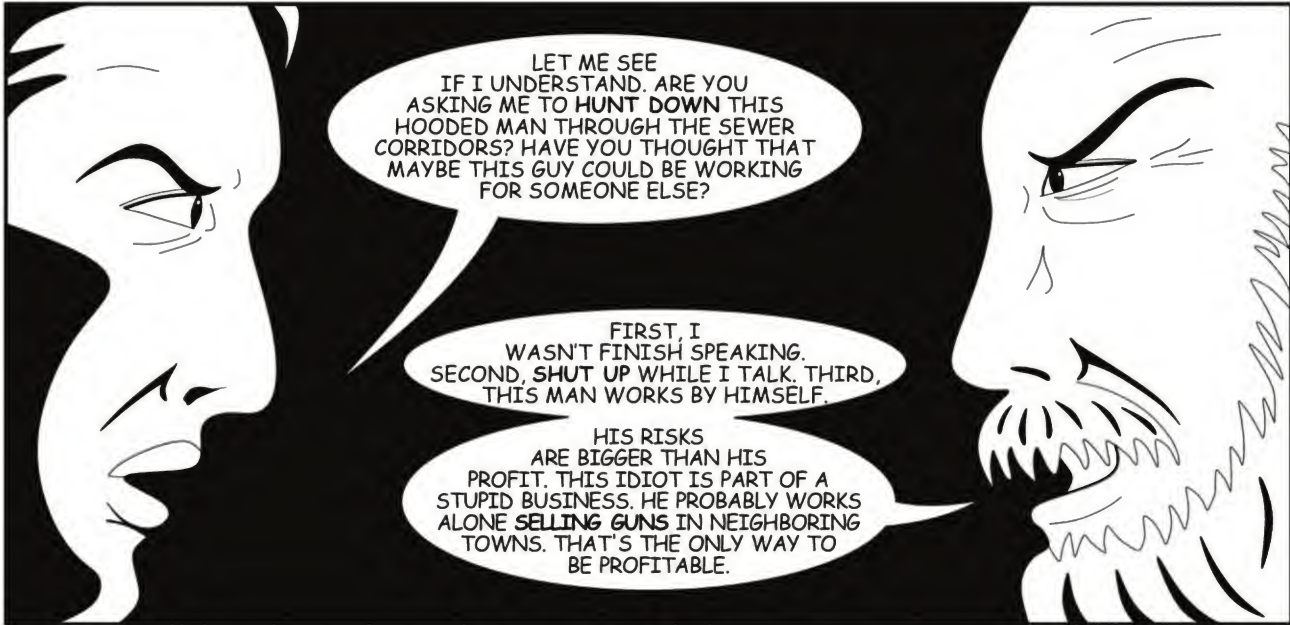
NOW JUST MYSELF. COPS AND THE MILITARY HAVE AUTHORIZATION TO DEAL GUNS IN THIS CITY. IN EVERY CRIME SCENE INVESTIGATION THAT HAPPENS IN THE NEIGHBORING TOWNS, THE COPS ARE FINDING GUNS MADE FROM MY FACTORY.

WHO DO YOU THINK THE LAW BLAMES FOR EACH MURDER THAT HAPPENS IN THESE NEIGHBORING TOWNS?

THEY KEEP THEMSELVES HOODED AS THEY'RE DEALING GUNS TO AVOID BEING SEEN BY THE POLICE. ONE OF THEM HAS A WAY OF GOING OUT TO THE NEIGHBORING CITIES AND COMING BACK HERE. HE IS MAKING GOOD MONEY AND IS SAVING A LOT OF CREDITS DOING IT.

HE OR SHE COULD BE A COP, A BUSINESS PERSON, OR A MEMBER OF THE MILITARY. I DON'T KNOW. BUT THIS PERSON IS DUSTING MY IMAGE IN FRONT OF THE LAW.





LET ME SEE  
IF I UNDERSTAND. ARE YOU  
ASKING ME TO HUNT DOWN THIS  
HOODED MAN THROUGH THE SEWER  
CORRIDORS? HAVE YOU THOUGHT THAT  
MAYBE THIS GUY COULD BE WORKING  
FOR SOMEONE ELSE?

FIRST, I  
WASN'T FINISH SPEAKING.  
SECOND, SHUT UP WHILE I TALK. THIRD,  
THIS MAN WORKS BY HIMSELF.

HIS RISKS  
ARE BIGGER THAN HIS  
PROFIT. THIS IDIOT IS PART OF A  
STUPID BUSINESS. HE PROBABLY WORKS  
ALONE **SELLING GUNS** IN NEIGHBORING  
TOWNS. THAT'S THE ONLY WAY TO  
BE PROFITABLE.

ONE OF MY RELIABLE BUSINESS PARTNERS  
FOLLOWED THIS MAN TO AN APARTMENT IN CITY  
CENTER. MY PARTNER SAID HE ALWAYS GOES THERE. HE  
ALWAYS MEET A GIRL WHO LOOKS LIKE A PROSTITUTE,  
SHE PROBABLY IS. EVERY NIGHT THE SAME GIRL.



ANYWAY,  
THE MISSION IS SIMPLE. WAIT  
FOR THIS GUY NEAR THE APARTMENT, GO IN  
THERE AND SHOOT HIM IN THE HEAD. THE GIRL  
TOO. THE WORLD WON'T MISS A BITCH.  
JUST THIS!



IN A "FRIENDLY CONVERSATION", HE SWORE TO  
ME THAT HE DOESN'T KNOW WHO THE HOODED MAN  
WAS. I BELIEVE HIM. HE IS A GOOD PARTNER. BUT I  
CAN'T KEEP ANYONE AROUND THIS MAN, IT CAN  
ONLY BRING SUSPICION ABOUT ME.







JUST THIS?

IF YOU WANT A BITCH DENOUNCING YOU TO THE LAW FEEL FREE TO DO IT. TEN THOUSAND CREDITS IN YOUR ACCOUNT TODAY, ANOTHER FIFTEEN THOUSAND AFTER YOU FINISH THE JOB.

THIS IS ENOUGH FOR YOU AND YOUR FATHER TO LEAVE THE CITY, IS IT NOT?



BUT... WHAT IF I DON'T WANT TO?


YOU WANT TO, YOU NEED TO AND YOU'LL DO IT. THERE IS MORE INFORMATION IN THE BOX.



EVERY THURSDAY  
01:00 A.M.  
BUILDING 358  
6B FLAT



THIS MIGHT BE THE ONLY WAY TO HELP MY FATHER...



I HOPE I MADE THE RIGHT DECISION...



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